



# MEDIA RELEASE

STATE OF TENNESSEE  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **TAX SEASON PAYING OFF FOR CHILDREN IN NEED OF SUPPORT**

*STATE CLAIMS MILLIONS OF DOLLARS FROM PARENTS WHO WON'T PAY*

NASHVILLE, Tenn.— The Federal Income Tax Refund Offset program is paying off for Tennessee children. The Department of Human Services has intercepted more than 17,000 tax refunds totaling more than \$22 million so far this year. Those numbers are expected to double in coming weeks as non-paying parents file their income tax returns. The state works with several federal agencies, including the IRS, to intercept tax refunds from parents who owe, but are not paying their child support.

“This program is just another way that DHS is cracking down on parents who refuse to do the right—and legal—thing by their children,” said Human Services Commissioner Gina Lodge. “Those parents who thought they could take a little vacation or buy something new for themselves with their tax refund are now seeing it go to help the children they aren’t supporting.”

The number of tax refunds the state is intercepting has increased nearly 15 percent over the last few years, and the refund checks have also increased. In 2004, the average refund check seized by the state for the first three months of the year was \$1,270; today it is \$1,300. The highest refund seized by DHS so far this year is \$10,000. The Federal Income Tax Refund Offset program has been in effect since 1981.

In addition to the Tax Refund Offset Program, the Department uses enforcement tools such as administrative wage assignments, license revocation and liens. Non-paying parents who are awarded worker's compensation claims are finding these funds being diverted to their children, as well.

The Department of Human Services continues to see increases in its child support collections. More than \$300 million in child support has been collected so far this state fiscal year, an increase of 10 percent over the same period last year.

For more information on the Tennessee Child Support Program, visit:  
<http://www.state.tn.us/humanserv/child-support.htm>

For more information on Federal Offset Programs, visit:  
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse/newhire/fop/fop.htm>

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